

# YALE UNIVERSITY

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To Whom It May Concern:

I am a research assistant in the Department of Psychiatry at Yale University, and I am also a graduate student in public health at the University of Connecticut. I write today to call your attention to an important matter, and urge you to take action.

As was my reaction at this time last year, it was with great alarm that I learned that budget cuts have been proposed once again to mental health and substances abuse services. Psychiatric disorders (“mental illnesses”), ranging from anxiety and depressive disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia, are serious public health problems. They are leading causes of disability, costing hundreds of billions of dollars annually. They also contribute to the worsening of general medical conditions. These conditions have a devastating impact on society, causing untold suffering of millions of people across this country. The majority of cases strike people while they are young, and seriously affect the trajectory of their entire lives.

Fortunately, many people in Connecticut have services to rely on which they wouldn’t be able to obtain without the state contributing funds. Nevertheless, all too many still can’t get the help they need. Those suffering with psychiatric disorders face tremendous difficulties in obtaining much needed and overdue care, with the net result being that all too many don’t receive any. Slashing funding means that this basic problem of access to care will deepen. While it may save money in the short term, it will ultimately cost more in the long term. This is in addition to the human costs.

Much talk has been made about increasing resources for the mental health field. It is alarming to find out that yet again there are proposals to do the diametric opposite and *decrease* resources through slashing funding. These cuts would reduce the ability of the already overstretched mental health system to provide care for those in need. I recognize that when it comes to budgetary issues, hard choices must sometimes be made. However, in the end, making further slashes to mental health services will only end up costing everyone more. **I urge you to oppose these proposed reductions in funding.**

Thank you for your time and consideration,

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